Engineer looks back at road he 'built' in Army career

Story and photo by Spc. Andrew Meissner, 1AD PAO

KARBALA, Iraq -- When James Flum enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1988 he was 21. He had been out of high school a few years, tried college, but it didn't work out.

Holding down odd jobs, he wanted something more in his life. Flum admitted he wasn't leading an outstanding life before he raised his right hand.

"I knew that I needed some kind of direction, my parents had nine kids to deal with, and I was probably the hardest one," he said.

His father had been a combat engineer and Flum decided on the same military occupation.

He began his Army career like a board game, at square one. "I came in as a buck Private – E-1," he said.

After completing Initial Entry Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., Flum was assigned to the 54h Engineer Battalion in Germany where he stayed for six years.

"I got extended. I was due (for a permanent change of station) to Fort Campbell and then stop-loss came about at the end of 1990 for Desert Storm," Flum explained.

By January 1991, Flum was a specialist deploying to Operation Desert Storm.

"My squad leader was on leave when the flag went up – he never came back. So they pinned corporal on me and told me to take charge," he recalled.

The newly appointed Cpl. Flum was now leading a six-man squad.

"It was different, it wasn't like what we're going through now, the fighting was all in the desert," said Flum. "We engaged bunkers, people on the ground, there was no urban fighting back then."

For his time in Desert Storm Flum received a division coin and a Certificate of Achievement. Upon his return, Flum was promoted to sergeant.

After his time with 54th Eng. Bn., Flum went to Fort Riley, Kan. He served with the 1st Infantry Division there until he received orders for Drill Sergeant's school.

"Somebody made that decision for me. They figured, probably, that I had such a good job at Riley that I was due for some pain," he related.

While on "the trail," Flum molded future combat engineers at Fort Leonard Wood for two years.

After leaving the drill pad in October 2000, Flum was assigned another

teaching position at Fort Leonard Wood.

"Back then, they didn't want people coming off the trail and then shoving them in a unit because they tended to be jerks, so they send us in a chill unit for a year," he explained.

He instructed Modernized Demolition Initiators (MDI), teaching demolitions.

"MDI is the baseline demolition instruction that we give to privates, before they go out in their units," he said.

Because of his position, Flum learned everything in the training manuals.

He knew everything about demolitions, backward and forward, "like the palm of my hand," Flum admitted.

He felt that his next tour would take him back overseas. Flum's wife is German, and she wanted to go back and see her family, so he requested to be stationed in that country.

"They gave me what I wanted, and in December 2001 I came over to the 16th Eng. Bn. in Giessen, and I've been with them ever since," Flum said.

Currently, Flum is the platoon sergeant in Company B, 16th Engineers – in charge of 24 Soldiers.

Flum said he thinks highly of his Soldiers and feels they have invaluable experience from the action they've seen.

"A lot of the privates that we have, they're new, they've only been in four to six months, but I will put their knowledge up against some E-4s (specialists), maybe even against some E-5s (sergeants) in other units that have not been deployed... because of everything they've learned out here," he said with pride

Yet, being out here is not always rosy for a platoon sergeant and Flum knows he has to be a model for his Soldiers.

"The hard part is to put on my game face everyday and tell (my Soldiers) they might have to go another mile on a mission when I know they're dog-tired, because I'm dog-tired," he said. "I can't show them that I'm getting tired, and I can't show them that I want to give up. I've got 24 guys that I've got to carry through this and they're doing well. They're doing really well."

With the extension of 1st Armored Division, Flum's unit was attached to Task Force 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment and moved to Karbala where they work closely with infantry and armor companies to remove Moqtada al Sadr's militia from that city.

Flum said he's learned many things in



Sgt 1st Class James Flum, platoon sergeant in 16th Engineer Battalion, pulls security on a dismounted patrol in Karbala, Iraq.The Iron Soldier's unit is attached to Task Force 1-37 Armor.

the past year and has much to take back to future combat engineers.

"Since I've been out here I've learned all about IEDs (improvised explosive devises). How they make them, how they wire them, what they make them out of, and recently, where they make them. I've got a lot of stuff in my head to take back for lessons-learned," he said.

Somewhere on his odyssey, Flum started smoking a burl wood pipe. He does it in a very slow and deliberate way. Flum looks young, with his clear blue eyes and closely cropped blond hair. In that respect the pipe looks out of place, but it accents his personality, scholarly demeanor and the air of wisdom Flum conveys.

When asked how he feels he performed on this deployment, Flum took some time to gather his thoughts and then came through with an answer that is much like he is, measured and honest.

"Sometimes I ought to be a little bit harder on (the Soldiers), but the conditions out here are hard enough," he says.

Stopping for a moment, Flum pondered and continued, "I'm like the glue, I have to keep them together and keep them straight, and to get them back safe and in one piece."

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"Quote" of the Day: "Do not anticipate trouble, or worry about what may never happen. Keep in the sunlight."

- Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), American public official, writer, scientist



Staff Sgt. Donald Durgin, a section chief with Battery C, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, rushes into a house during a training exercise focusing on raids and searches. Photo by Spc Jeanine Kinville, 1AD PAO.

Oddly Enough...

Indiana man survives 69,000-volt shock

CLARKSVILLE, Ind. - A 22-year-old man who climbed an electrical tower survived a 69,000-volt shock that a utility official said was nearly always fatal.

Jason Grisham was in fair condition Wednesday in a hospital burn unit.

Police and a Cinergy/PSI employee found Grisham asking for help as he emerged Sunday from behind a building at a substation where the tower was scaled.

Grisham "appeared to have extensive burn marks on his chest and his pants appeared to have exploded," police said.

Grisham, from New Albany, scaled the fence around the tower about 6:30

a.m. and then started to climb the tower itself, rising 12 to 15 feet before he "received a dose of ... electricity and was knocked to the ground," said police, who were seeking a toxicology report.

"Contact with that level of voltage is almost always fatal," Cinergy/PSI spokeswoman Angeline Protogere said. She noted that household voltage is mostly 120 volts.

Protogere said the shock disrupted power to 6,800 customers.

The fence Grisham climbed is 7 feet tall and has three strands of barbed wire on top of it, and there are "clearly visible signs" saying "Danger/High Voltage," Protogere said.

Chaplain's Thought for the Day...

Carelessness

For want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy; and for want of care about a horseshoe nail.

Today in History...

1098

Christian Crusaders of the First Crusade seize Antioch, Turkey.

Hernando De Soto claims Florida for Spain.

1861

Union troops defeat Confederate forces at Philippi, in western Virginia

1864

Some 7,000 Union troops are killed within 30 minutes during the Battle of Cold Harbor in Virginia.

1918

The Finnish Parliament ratifies a treaty with Germany.

1928

Manchurian warlord Chian Tso-Lin dies as a result of a bomb blast set off by the Japanese.

1938

The German Third Reich votes to confiscate so-called "degenerate art."

1940

The German Luftwaffe hits Paris with 1,100 bombs.

1942

Japanese carrier-based planes strafe Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands as a diversion of the attack on Midway Island.

1952

A rebellion by North Korean prisoners in the Koje prison camp in South Korea is put down by American troops.

1974

Charles Colson, an aide to President Richard Nixon, pleads guilty to obstruction of justice.

1989

The Chinese government begins its crackdown on pro-democracy activists in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Hundreds are killed and thousands are arrested.



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For your Information...



THE IRON SOLDIERS' GUIDE TO VOTING IN IRAQ



STEP 1: Register to vote and receive your absentee ballot!

Eligibility: Must be a US Citizen, at least 18 years of age, not on parole for conviction of a felony, and not judged by a court to be mentally incompetent to register and vote.

Complete the Federal Post Card Registration and Absentee Ballot Request. Because you are a service member overseas, there are special provisions for you to register and receive an overseas absentee ballot. To do this, you need to complete and mail a Federal Post Card Registration and Absentee Ballot Request (FPCA) to your Local Election Official (LEO). This form is available in Adobe Acrobat format and must be filled in, printed out, signed, dated, placed in an envelope with "FREE MAIL" in the corner, and mailed to the appropriate LEO. Please see your unit voting assistance officer for the address to your LEO in your district.

Please Note-- The following States/Territories cannot accept the On-Line Version of the Federal Post Card Application: American Samoa, Guam, Louisiana, Ohio, and Puerto Rico.

Different states have different requirements for the FPCA. The on-line version of the Voting Assistance Guide contains up to date information for state-by-state registration and absentee ballot request procedures.

STEP 2: Receive absentee ballot, vote, and mail in ballot by deadline. Now is your time to be heard! Make your votes count; educate yourself on the issues and candidates. In addition to reading U.S. news magazines and newspapers, both Democrats Abroad and Republicans Abroad maintain overseas offices and have information about the candidates and issues. www.republicansabroad.org, www.democratsabroad.org

Another great resource for information on voting and elections is the Federal Voting Assistance Program website, www.fvap.gov.



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	myafn.net TV SCHEDULES: THURSDAY, JUNE 03, 2004			As of: Wednesday, June 02, 2004 5:22:21 PM		
Start Time	SPORTS	ATI ANTIC	SPECTRUM	PACIFIC	NEWS	Start Time
0:00	SPORTSCENTER			<u></u>	HEADLINE NEWS	0:00
0:30		ACCESS HOLLYWOOD			NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	0:30
1:00	SPORTS SPECIAL - 26TH BOLDER BOULDER MEMORIAL DAY 10K RACE	MLB - BALTIMORE ORIOLES @ NY YANKEES	THE WILD THORNBERRYS (TVY): - YOU OTTER KNOW	SESAME STREET	ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT	1:00
1:30			SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (TVY): - SOMETHING SMELLS / BOSSY BOOTS		CBS EVENING NEWS	1:30
2:00			THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - \$PRINGFIELD	PLAY WITH ME SESAME	COUNTDOWN WITH KEITH OLBERMANN	2:00
2:30	FIM WORLD SUPERBIKE SERIES - RACE2 (GERMANY)		HAPPY DAYS (TVG): - GUESS WHO'S COMING TO VISIT	WHEEL OF FORTUNE (TVG):		2:30
3:00			ONE TREE HILL (TVPG): - PILOT	THE DR. PHIL SHOW (TVPG):	HANNITY & COLMES	3:00
3:30	ESPNEWS		ONE THEE THEE (TO O). THEO			3:30
4:00	MLB - BOSTON RED SOX @ ANAHEIM ANGELS	BASEBALL TONIGHT	THE WEST WING (TVPG): - ELECTIONNIGHT	THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW (TVPG):	THE NEWSHOUR	4:00
5:00	MED BOOTON REBOON OF WAREHOUSE	HEADLINE NEWS		NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	BET NIGHTLY NEWS	5:00
			DOMINICK DUNNE'S POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND JUSTICE (TVPG): - MIAMI VICES			
5:30		ESPNEWS		JUDGE JUDY (TVPG):	NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT	5:30
6:00		HEADLINE NEWS	JOURNEYS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH - SWAHILI SINBADS	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	LARRY KING LIVE	6:00
6:25				GUIDING LIGHT (TV14):		6:25
6:30		HEADLINE NEWS				6:30
7:00	RIP CURL PRESENTS - THE SINKING ISLANDS	SESAME STREET	MASTERPIECE THEATER (TVPG): - THE WAY WE LIVE NOW (PT. 2)		NEWSNIGHT WITH AARON BROWN	7:00
7:13				GENERAL HOSPITAL (TV14):		7:13
7:30	TOTALLY NASCAR					7:30
8:00	SPORTSCENTER	PLAY WITH ME SESAME		DISNEY'S HERCULES (TVY): - THE TROJAN WAR	PAULA ZAHN NOW	8:00
8:30		WHEEL OF FORTUNE (TVG):		HEY ARNOLD! (TVY): - GIRL TROUBLE/ SCHOOL DANCE		8:30
9:00	MLB - SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS @ ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS	THE DR. PHIL SHOW (TVPG):	THE WILD THORNBERRYS (TVY): - YOU OTTER KNOW	YU-GI-OH! (TVY): - ARENA OF LOST SOULS (PT. 1)	NIGHTLINE	9:00
9:30			SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (TVY): - SOMETHING SMELLS / BOSSY BOOTS	JACKIE CHAN ADVENTURES (TVY7): - TALE OF THE DEMON TAIL	AIR FORCE TV NEWS	9:30
9:46		THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW (TVPG):				9:46
10:00			THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - \$PRINGFIELD	JEOPARDY! (TVG):	HARDBALL WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS	10:00
10:30			HAPPY DAYS (TVG): - GUESS WHO'S COMING TO VISIT	HEADLINE NEWS		10:30
10:35		GUIDING LIGHT (TV14):				10:35
11:00			ONE TREE HILL (TVPG): - PILOT	ESPNEWS	60 MINUTES II	11:00
11:17		GENERAL HOSPITAL (TV14):	` '			11:17
11:30				PACIFIC REPORT		11:30
12:00	SPORTSCENTER	HEADLINE NEWS	THE WEST WING (TVPG): - ELECTIONNIGHT	EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND (TVPG): - HOME FROM SCHOOL	THE O'REILLY FACTOR	12:00
12:25			(SCRUBS (TV14): -MY FRIEND THE DOCTOR		12:25
12:30		JUDGE JUDY (TVPG):				12:30
12:50		00002 0001 (111 0).		REEL TIME		12:50
13:00	NBA FASTBREAK	TODAY	DOMINICK DUNNE'S POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND JUSTICE (TVPG): - MIAMI	THE BACHELOR (TV14):	GOOD MORNING AMERICA	13:00
		IODAI	VICES	THE BACHELOR (1V14).	GOOD MORNING AMERICA	
13:30	TOTALLY NASCAR					13:30
14:00	FRENCH OPEN TENNIS - WOMEN'S SEMIFINALS		JOURNEYS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH - SWAHILI SINBADS	E.R. (TVPG): -NICU		14:00
15:00		DISNEY'S HERCULES (TVY): - THE TROJAN WAR	MASTERPIECE THEATER (TVPG): - THE WAY WE LIVE NOW (PT. 2)	PACIFIC REPORT	HEADLINE NEWS	15:00
15:30		HEY ARNOLD! (TVY): - GIRL TROUBLE/ SCHOOL DANCE		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO (TVPG):	ABC WORLD NEWS THIS MORNING	15:30
16:00		YU-GI-OH! (TVY): - ARENA OF LOST SOULS (PT. 1)			THE EARLY SHOW	16:00
16:30		JACKIE CHAN ADVENTURES (TVY7): - TALE OF THE DEMONTAIL		THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN (TVPG):		16:30
17:00		JEOPARDY! (TVG):	THE WILD THORNBERRYS (TVY): - YOU OTTER KNOW			17:00
17:30		HEADLINE NEWS	SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (TVY): - SOMETHING SMELLS / BOSSY BOOTS	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD		17:30
18:00		ESPNEWS	THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - \$PRINGFIELD	VICTOR/VICTORIA	FOX NEWS LIVE	18:00
18:30		HEADLINE NEWS	HAPPY DAYS (TVG): - GUESS WHO'S COMING TO VISIT			18:30
19:00	SPORTSCENTER	EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND (TVPG): - HOME FROM SCHOOL	ONE TREE HILL (TVPG): - PILOT		60 MINUTES II	19:00
19:25		SCRUBS (TV14): -MY FRIEND THE DOCTOR				19:25
19:50		REEL TIME				19:50
20:00	AUSSIE RULES FOOTBALL HIGHLIGHTS	THE BACHELOR (TV14):	THE WEST WING (TVPG): - ELECTIONNIGHT		FOX NEWS LIVE	20:00
20:30				FRANKENSTEIN		20:30
21:00	THE HOT LIST	E.R. (TVPG): -NICU	DOMINICK DUNNE'S POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND JUSTICE (TVPG): - MIAMI		HEADLINE NEWS	21:00
21:30	SPORTSCENTER	, ,,	VICES		INSIDE POLITICS	21:30
22:00	PGA TOUR - THE MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT: FIRST ROUND	HEADLINE NEWS	JOURNEYS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH - SWAHILI SINBADS	ESPNEWS: THE HOT LIST	INGIDE FOLITICS	22:00
	- 34 TOUR - THE MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT, PIRST ROUND		SOURIETS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH - SWAMESINDADS		AID FORCE THE MENT	
22:30		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO (TVPG):	MARTERIA TUESTED (TUESTED AT A STATE OF THE	HEADLINE NEWS	AIR FORCE TV NEWS	22:30
23:00		THE LATE CHANGING THE COMPANY OF THE	MASTERPIECE THEATER (TVPG): - THE WAY WE LIVE NOW (PT. 2)	TODAY	LESTER HOLT LIVE	23:00
23:30		THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN (TVPG):	1		1	23:30